

This 31 day devotional is a compilation of life and lessons from the every day grind on the mission field. Set in Scotland, each reading contains thoughtful scriptures, honest stories, and reflective moments.

A Camel In The Castle

by Julie Goldschmidt

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JULIE GOLDSCHMIDT

A *Camel*
IN THE CASTLE



31 day Devotional

A CAMEL, A WHEELCHAIR, AN EMPTY
CHURCH: LIFE-LESSONS & MINISTRY
ADVENTURES FROM SCOTLAND

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pain. I listen. I cry with them. I hug them. I feed them. I tell them God is nearby should they want to reach for him.

Let's pray together:

Lord, help me today to let go of hurt. I don't want to carry it around anymore. I know I was made for more than this. Bring your peace, bring your joy, bring your renewing power. Wrap my wounds with your soothing balm. Help my hurts to heal. My spirit feels crushed. Will you sit with me in my pain for a while? Soon, will you help me back up again? Keep my heart from growing callous. Keep my spirit soft and sensitive. Thank you that you are with me. In your refuge I find strength.

YOU'RE BLOCKING THE KING

9

After years of renewing visas, we had come to the point where our family felt it best to get our U.K. citizenship. We still carry American passports, but dual citizenship seemed best for our children who have never lived in the USA. We had to pay a large fee, fill out tons of paperwork, take a language test, and then pass a *Life in the U.K.* exam with thousands of questions. The final step was to be sworn in before the Queen.

We were invited up to the Edinburgh City Chambers for the ceremony. In a grand room with a wall of windows overlooking the city skyline, we stood with about twenty to thirty other people and swore our allegiance to God and Queen. It was quite touching. To hold the passports of two powerful, wealthy, wonderfully free countries is a privilege that I do not take lightly. I'm quite proud and thankful for the countries I belong to.

At the end of the ceremony, they called each family up to stand *beside* a huge, realistic oil painting of Queen Elizabeth. You get a gold coin and a lovely photo. It was all done very British: orderly, quiet, serious, following the rules.

When we heard our names called, we went to the front. I got the two girls ready facing the photographer and had just stood up to position myself. Before I knew what was happening, in a loud, serious, voice the guard next to the photographer shouted out (in a most proper British accent). "Excuse me sir! You're **BLOCKING** the Queen! Move over!" Dave, who never gets embarrassed, turned red realizing he was too close to the painting. He jumped away from the Queen knocking against the portrait stand and wobbling it a bit. He yelled back across the room nervously apologizing. The entire room burst into laughter. Luckily the Queen was okay.

What happened in that uncomfortable moment is that my husband had committed a carless offense. He positioned himself in *front* of the most important person in the room. She was meant to be the star of the photo and he had blocked others view of *her*. While we can look back and laugh at that day. There's a great takeaway here: never be a Christian who blocks someone's views of the KING!

One of the top reasons why people say they don't attend church is because of hypocrisy. In other words, they have met people that *call* themselves Christians but *act* contradictory. Hypocrisy is claiming to know and follow certain beliefs but to *behave* in a way that counteracts those beliefs. A hypocrite can block someone's view of the King.

A friend told me this story. She had been asking her friend to visit church with her for months. After a very long time, the friend finally accepted and came to a Sunday service. They went to lunch after, and my friend asked how her guest liked the service. "It was good, I guess. But that guy up on the stage playing guitar. He actually works at my gym. He is always rude, inappropriate to women, and just a complete jerk. I'm pretty surprised your church lets him play on the stage. I just don't know if I would to go to church with people like him?" She never came back. That young lady missed seeing Jesus that day because someone was blocking her view. What a shame when people miss out on the outstanding love of God because of other people.

If you've been put off or confused by people that talk the talk but don't walk the walk it's helpful to know that Jesus had a problem with hypocrisy too. He asks his followers, the crowds, and the religious leaders, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and *not* do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Jesus has a big problem with people who say they want to follow him but don't put into practice his teachings. If we say we are Christ followers...we are responsible to live like him. In Mark 7:6, Jesus is calling them out again, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips; but their hearts are far from me.'"

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Just like that guitar player on the stage singing lovely songs in church, then going to his workplace and acting completely opposite, his heart was not right.

How do we know if someone is the real deal? Well, Galatians gives us a good picture of what a Godly person looks like. They will exude qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. They will also act like Jesus. Jesus was inclusive; he was justice driven; he called out sin. Jesus was honest, respectful, and a good friend. Jesus turned the other cheek. Jesus loved God's Word, and he knew the teachings of the Bible. He didn't distort them for his own purposes.

It is important we don't expect Christ followers to be perfect, however. Even genuine Christians are just people. People make mistakes and act selfish at times—people are people. God is God. Don't mix the two up. Do not hold against God what people have done to you. Do not hold a grudge against all churches because you have experienced a bad one. How sad to miss out on the goodness of the King because of the people blocking your view.

Maybe this devotional is a sign to you today. *Get back to church.* Trust me when I tell you as someone who has been in churches her whole life: I have seen the worst of people. Everything ugly, I have seen. I've been wounded by people in the church. But I have *also* seen the beautiful, wonderful side of church family. I have been held up by the prayers of my church when I could barely stand. I have been made meals and sent scriptures when my life was falling apart. I have laughed with my church family and cried with them. We need each other.

We sharpen each other, uplift each other, and encourage each other. We celebrate each other's wins. The Bible teaches church attendance for believers is a must. So maybe it'll take some time but find yourself a good church family and get involved. You will get out of church what you put into it. Family is messy but also essential to your growth. We are the body of Christ, and a body part is not very effective if it's missing its other parts.

If you know you have not been fully committed to living out your faith, *now* is a great day to make it right. Ask God to forgive you. Ask him to help you become

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Scotland

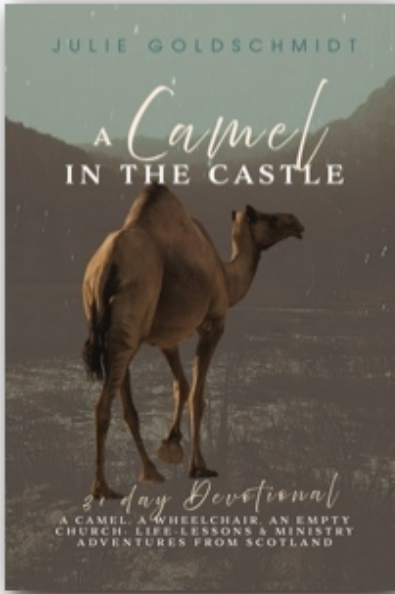
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